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Chief Executive Officer

County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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February 12, 2021

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Fesia A. Davenport
Chief Executive Officer

BOARD REPORT BACK: RENAMING THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS TRANSCONTINENTAL HIGHWAY (ITEM NO. 59-G, AGENDA OF OCTOBER 13, 2020)

On October 13, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion directing the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in partnership with the Los Angeles County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), to collaborate with our partners in the State Legislature and the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) for the removal and replacement of the I-10 Freeway's designation as the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway, and to report back in 120 days.

The Board further directed the Department of Public Works (DPW), in partnership with LANAIC, to identify and map any wayfinding or directional signage in Los Angeles County that references the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway; work with the appropriate jurisdiction for the removal and/or replacement of identified signs; and to report back in 120 days.

Immediately following the adoption of the Board motion, the CEO, DPW, and LANAIC formed a workgroup that meets regularly to address the directives in the motion. The workgroup will submit periodic updates to the Board until all directives are completed. This initial report provides an overview on the progress made thus far.

CEO Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations' Sacramento advocates met with CalSTA representatives and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

to determine how the I-10 Freeway was designated as the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Freeway. The California portion of the I-10 Freeway was named by the State Legislature in 1976 through a joint Assembly Concurrent Resolution. The I-10 Freeway, which begins in California, runs through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida spanning 3,000 miles.

The DPW staff contacted Caltrans District 7 to identify and map any wayfinding or directional signage that reference the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway within the I-10 Freeway right-of-way in Los Angeles County. One sign was identified on the I-10 Freeway in the eastbound direction west of Cloverfield Boulevard in the City of Santa Monica (Attachment I). Caltrans District 7 staff indicated that the sign and posts could be removed if directed by their administration after a joint resolution of the Legislature is passed.

Additionally, DPW staff contacted 14 cities in Los Angeles County to identify and map any wayfinding or directional signage that references the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway within non-Caltrans right-of-way in the vicinity of the I-10 Freeway. All 14 cities, including the cities of Alhambra, Baldwin Park, Claremont, Covina, Culver City, El Monte, Los Angeles, Monterey Park, Pomona, Rosemead, San Dimas, San Gabriel, Santa Monica, and West Covina reported they did not identify any wayfinding or directional signage within their respective jurisdictions.

Concurrently, LANAIC staff, in consultation with LANAIC Chairwoman Chrissie Castro, is developing draft joint resolution language. The language will reflect the Board's intent to remove the positive portrayal of Christopher Columbus in part because of the mental and emotional stress such portrayal has on Native and indigenous populations from the specified section of the I-10 Freeway. Additionally, the language will reflect the intent to rename that portion of the freeway following consultation with area tribal leaders and key stakeholders.

Prior to submitting the finalized draft joint resolution language to the identified legislative author, the Sacramento advocates and LANAIC will submit the draft language to the authors of this Board motion to ensure it is aligned with their original intent.

The Sacramento advocates anticipate identifying an author within the next 30 days to introduce the proposed joint resolution, which is not subject to regular bill introduction deadlines, and have presented the Board motion to legislative committee staff and the Governor's office to build support and address any initial concerns and/or questions. Following a discussion with the staff for the legislative Native American Affairs Select Committee, Assemblymember James Ramos, Select Committee Chair, submitted a letter in support of this effort (Attachment II).

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This office will continue to keep the Board apprised of further updates through a Sacramento Update memorandum.

Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Brian J. Stiger at (916) 441-7888 or bstiger@ceo.lacounty.gov.

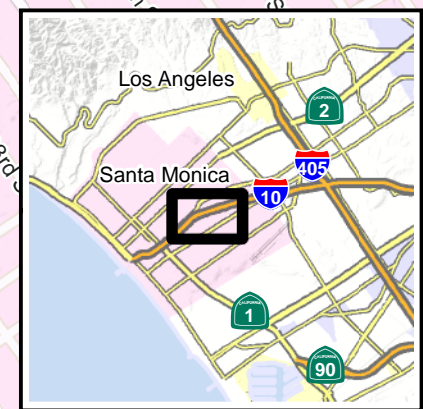
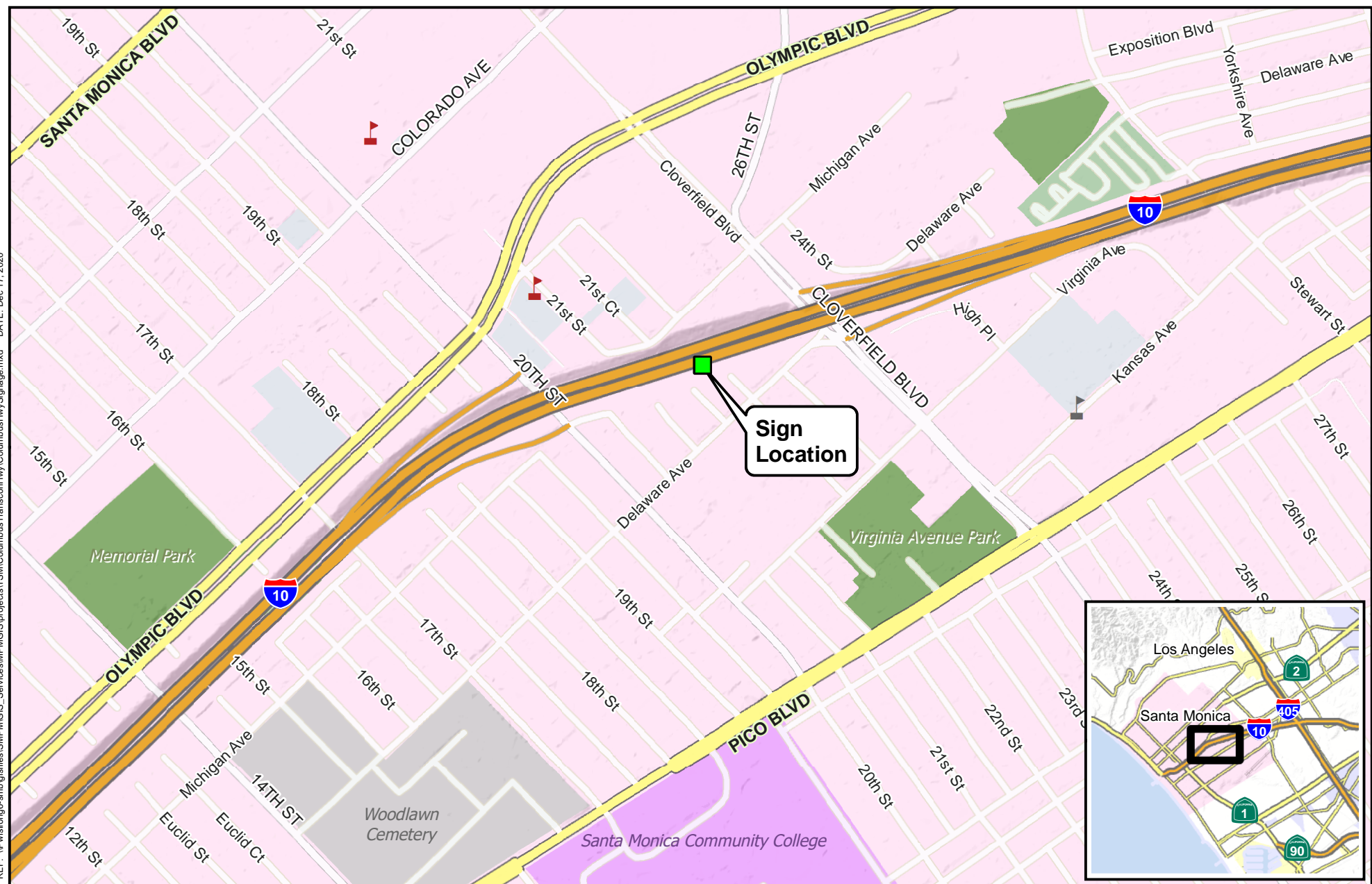
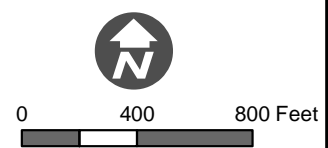
FAD:JMN:SA
BS:JAC:dr

Attachments

- c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
 County Counsel
 Public Works
 Los Angeles County Native American Indian Commission



Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway Signage on the Eastbound I-10 Fwy, Santa Monica, CA



REF: V:\p\long6-smb\gisfiles\SMP\MGIS_Services\MIP\MGIS\projects\TSM\ColumbusTransconHwySignage.mxd DATE: Dec 17, 2020

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0040
(916) 319-2040
FAX (916) 319-2040



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November 18, 2020

Kathryn Barger, Chair
Los Angeles County Supervisors
500 West Temple St. Ste 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Via email: Kathryn@bos.lacounty.gov

RE: Renaming the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway

Dear Chairwoman Barger,

It is with great pleasure that I thank you and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on their decision to rename the Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway.

As the first California Native American elected to the Legislature and Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Native American Affairs, I welcome this renaming. Columbus is a symbol of genocide and atrocities toward Indigenous people throughout the world, including the United States. We need to harness this opportunity to portray factual history from the view of those who suffered. Yet, we must also focus on the present in order to change the future.

Today, my community still lags behind our fellow citizens in educational and economic opportunity, in access to health care and civic participation. These disparities are all symptoms of ongoing disrespect and prejudice.

On June 18, we marked the one-year anniversary of Governor Gavin Newsom's formal apology to Native Americans for California's genocide, maltreatment and neglect. The apology, like the renaming, was welcomed. But such actions are a step and a beginning, not a solution.

Native American women and girls have been murdered and missing at rates as high as 10 times the national rate on some reservations. Their assailants are too often protected by a tangle of confused law enforcement and judicial authority covering crimes on tribal lands. That's why we urge greater justice system collaboration and communication on reservations.

Over the summer, the state auditor reported the University of California has yet to return tribal remains and cultural artifacts despite state and federal laws to do so and the pleas of a

community anxious to bury those remains with the traditional devotion and respect they deserve.

We must move past the anger and start healing, but that cannot be accomplished until frank discussions occur and inequities are resolved. The board's decision to rename the highway takes a step in the right direction. For that, I thank you and applaud your hard work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James C. Ramos", with a stylized flourish at the end.

James C. Ramos
Assemblymember, 40th District